

MUDD CREEK TIMBER SALE

June 18, 2007 Land Board

Location of Sale:

- Plains Unit (NWLO) – Approximately 13 air miles North of Plains, Montana.
- Sanders County – Section 18, T22N, R26W
- 100 % Public Buildings Trust

Sale Volume & Estimated Value:

- The estimated volume is 34,878 tons (4,246 MBF) with an estimated minimum value of \$610,308.00 or \$17.50/ton.
- In addition to the estimated stumpage value, a fee of \$2.38/ton for Forest Improvement will be charged for all merchantable sawlog timber harvested.
- 8.2 tons/MBF is the conversion factor.

Sale & Harvest Treatments:

- The sale includes 10 harvest units plus 55 acres of Right-of-Way clearing for a total of 557 acres.
- Proposed silvicultural prescriptions include a shelterwood harvest on 327 acres and a commercial thinning on 175 acres. These silvicultural prescriptions are planned to reduce fuel loading by removing trees infected with bark beetles and dwarf mistletoe. Healthy, large diameter overstory trees would be retained, favoring western larch, ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir to act as seed trees within the shelterwood harvest areas. These shelterwood harvest areas would also be monitored for regeneration and planted where necessary.
- No old growth would be harvested.

Harvest Systems:

- 71% tractor
- 29% skyline

Road Construction:

- Approximately 6.83 miles of new road construction and 10.16 miles of reconstruction/reconditioning are required to access the harvest units and upgrade existing roads to meet current BMPs. All currently closed roads and all new construction would be closed to provide wildlife security and to reduce the spread of noxious weeds.

Public Involvement & Issues:

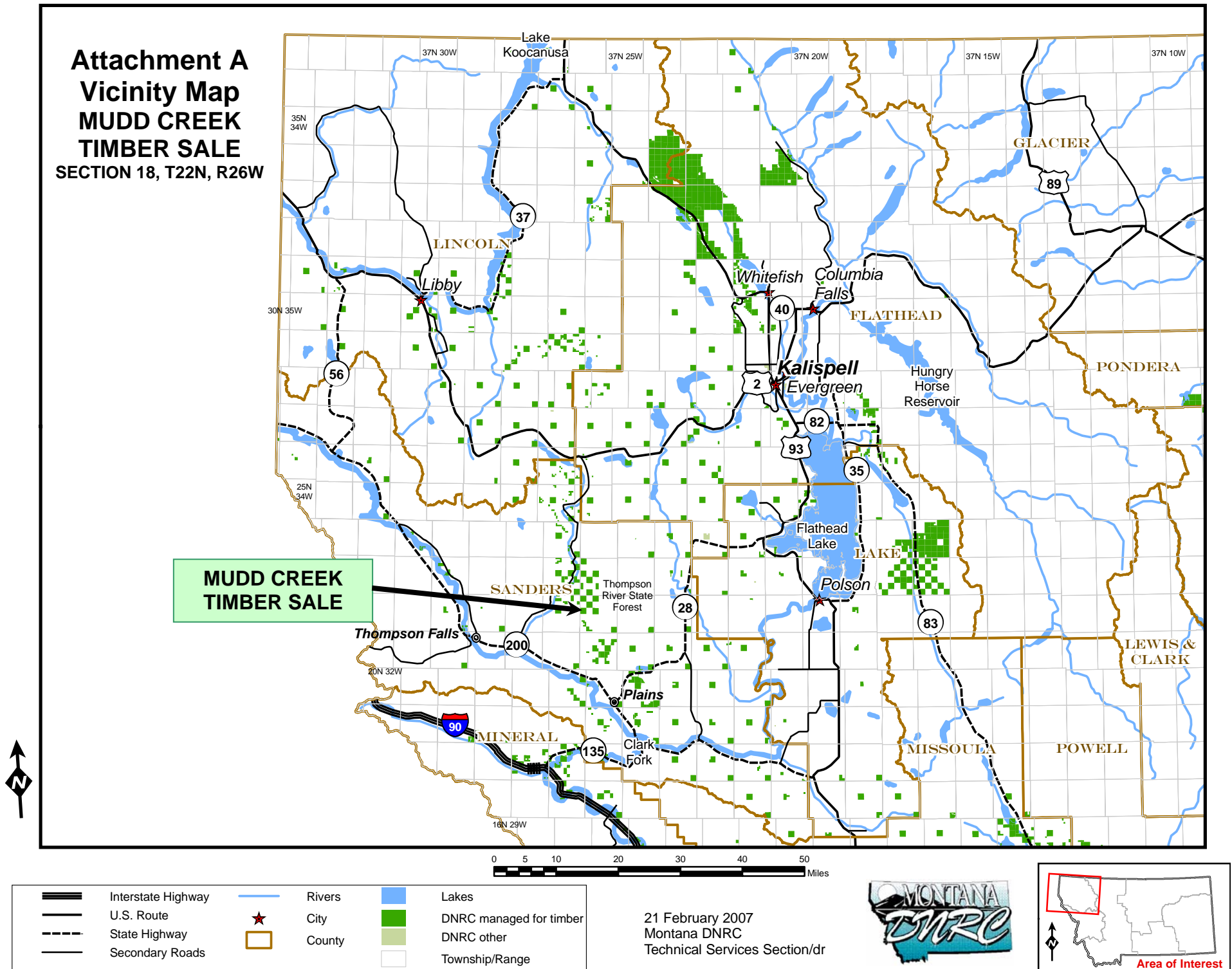
- Public involvement was solicited through legal notices in the *Valley Press* and the *Sanders County Ledger*. Letters were also sent to adjacent landowners and special interest groups. The public, DNRC specialists and specialists from other agencies helped identify the issues that were analyzed. Areas of concern were wildlife, road use and construction, and spread of noxious weeds.

Public Comments, Issues and Mitigations:

- **Big game (loss of cover):** The project area involves lands within identified and delineated big game winter ranges. An average of 35-40% canopy cover will be retained in harvest units to provide thermal cover. Big game security will be maintained using a combination of restricted road access and visual screening along the open county road. Retention of shrubs and trees along the open road, road closures, broken topography, and unharvested areas would maintain limited sight distances within the project area. Hunter access would not change with the action alternative.
- **Gray Wolf:** The project area is located within the Fishtrap Pack's home range. The following measures would be incorporated into the harvest contract and sale layout: 1) Suspend operations and temporarily restrict use of roads within a 1-mile radius of any known active wolf den; 2) Suspend operations and consult a DNRC biologist if a suspected rendezvous site is observed within 0.5 miles of any ongoing project activities; 3) Close unnecessary roads and skid trails after harvest activities to reduce the potential for motor vehicle disturbance; and 4) use a combination of topography, group retention, and roadside vegetation buffers to reduce views into harvest units along open roads.
- **Pileated Woodpecker/ Flammulated Owl:** The project lies within Pileated Woodpecker and Flammulated Owl habitat. Habitat retention would be addressed by: 1) favoring western larch and ponderosa pine in retention and regeneration decisions; 2) reduce motorized access to limit potential loss of existing snags to firewood gathering; and 3) manage for snags, snag recruits, and coarse woody debris as defined by ARM.
- **Noxious Weeds** – Heavy equipment used for felling, skidding, log processing and loading activities would be washed and inspected before being brought on site. All disturbed areas would be seeded with a native grass mix. The project area would be monitored and, if needed, scheduled for herbicide treatment.
- **Road Use/Construction** – Access to the sale is across an existing county road. Cautionary signs identifying logging activities and traffic would be posted at appropriate public road junctions.

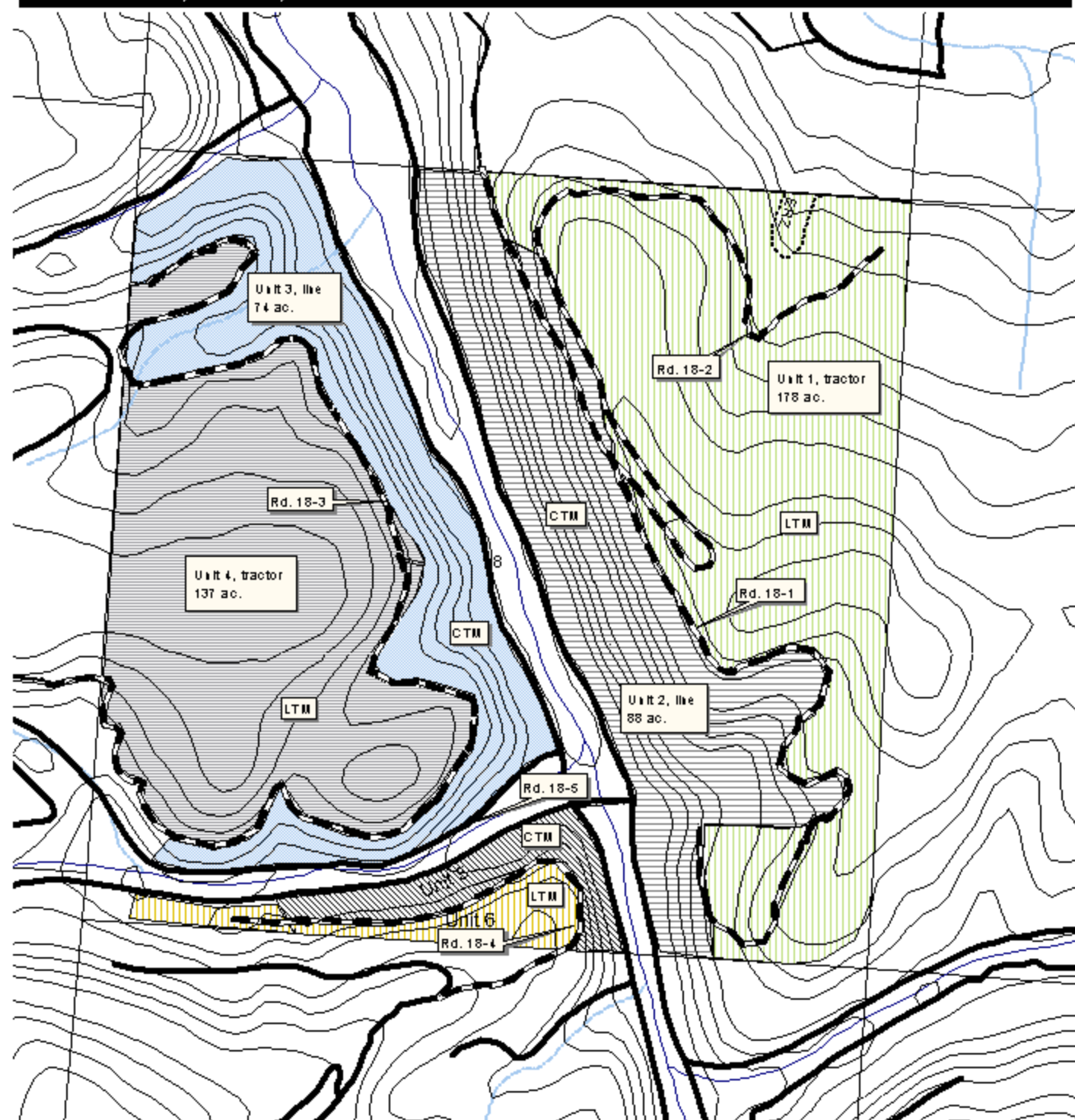
The Director recommends the Land Board direct the Department to sell the Mudd Creek Timber Sale.

Attachment A Vicinity Map MUDD CREEK TIMBER SALE SECTION 18, T22N, R26W



Mudd Creek Timber Sale, Harvest Map

Sec. 18, T22N, R26W



	New Construction		Unit 3, 74 ac.
	Existing Roads		Unit 4, 137 ac.
	Unit 1, 178 ac.		Unit 5, 13 ac, live
	Unit 2, 88 ac.		Unit 6, 11 ac, tractor

Montana DNR
Trust Land Management Division
Northwestern Land Office
Plains Unit



0.1 0 0.1 0.2 0.3 Miles
1 : 12,092 1 inch = 0.19 miles